



## **MDCR/MCRC E-newsletter for October 30, 2013**

### [State Rep. Woodrow Stanley proposes that tenants with mobility impairment have options to move to first floor](#)

From MLive, 10/30/13

FLINT — State Rep. Woodrow Stanley hopes to help mobility-impaired tenants with new legislation.

### [Fight heats up over Royal Oak human rights ballot issue](#)

From the Detroit News, 10/29/13

Royal Oak — Supporters of Royal Oak's human rights ordinance hope the growing acceptance of lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual people can be translated into a win at the polls next week, 12 years after city voters decisively rejected a similar measure.

### [Trail in Rockford offers therapeutic horse ride](#)

From the Grand Rapids Press, 10/29/13

ROCKFORD — Imagine standing in the bright Arizona sun with no sunglasses, dressed in a hot, scratchy sweater, with all the sights and loud sounds of city life ringing in your ears.

### [Western Michigan University professors' union votes to censure Provost Tim Greene](#)

From MLive, 10/28/13

KALAMAZOO — In a rare step, the Western Michigan University professors' union has voted to censure Provost Tim Greene for his handling of the ongoing issue of gender equity for female faculty.

### [Anti-bias laws for gays gain support across mid-Michigan](#)

From the Lansing State Journal, 10/28/13

In 2004, Michigan voters lined up solidly behind an amendment to the state constitution that said "the union of one man and one woman in marriage" would be the only sort of marriage the state cared to recognize. The voters of Delta Township were no exception. The tally there was 9,908 in favor to 7,600 against.

### [Raising a voice for transgendered people](#)

From the Mining Gazette, 10/25/13

HOUGHTON - October is LGBTQ History Month. For the past four weeks, the Michigan Technological University Center for Diversity and Inclusion has celebrated by bringing in special speakers affiliated with the subject, including the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and spoken word poet Michael Reyes. Thursday evening the CDI, along with Keweenaw Pride and the Parents Fund of the Michigan Tech Fund, sponsored a visit from attorney, professor, transgender rights activist and founder of the Trans People of Color Coalition Kylar Broadus.

### [Leonard Pitts Jr.: '12 Years a Slave' more than a masterpiece](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 10/25/13  
The film surprises you with vast silences.

It is an emptiness that at first seems jarring to sensibilities trained to believe every moment must be crammed. By contrast, this movie takes you into moments of pregnant stillness: no movement on the screen, no dialogue, no swelling music to cue your emotions. At one point, the camera takes what feels like a minute to study Solomon Northup's face as he absorbs the awfulness of his predicament. He does nothing. He says nothing. He simply is.

### **Snyder Remains Noncommittal On Civil Rights Protections For Gays**

From Gongwer, 10/24/13

EAST LANSING - Governor Rick Snyder offered Thursday a bit more insight, but only a bit, into what he thinks about whether current law allowing employers to fire people for being gay should be changed.

Mr. Snyder's refusal to take a position on broadening the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to people based on sexual orientation has angered supporters of gay rights and prompted Democrats to criticize the governor.

Answering questions from reporters after a speech to the Michigan Manufacturers Association about the dismay among those who want to see the civil rights act extended to gays, he offered his standard answer that he remains focused on jobs.

"It's something at some point I'm happy to have a discussion on," he said. "I'm waiting to see when legislators may also have that as an item of interest."

Indeed, talks have been taking place behind the scenes between Democratic and Republican legislators about a bill that would protect people from discrimination in employment, housing and at public facilities based on their sexual orientation. Democrats have held off introducing a bill this term in hopes those talks will lead to a Republican sponsor, but there also is some uncertainty about when would be the right time to move (the right time meaning when it would have the best chance of passing).

Mr. Snyder was asked if it is acceptable in Michigan for someone to be fired from a job for being gay.

"In terms of people being fired for no good reason, that's always an issue. That shouldn't happen," he said.

That prompted a follow-up question asking if firing someone for being gay qualified as "no good reason." Mr. Snyder responded, "You want to see people have an opportunity to have a career."

Mr. Snyder was again asked if being gay was "no good reason to be fired," prompting Mr. Snyder to respond, "That's a broad statement, so it would depend on the particular facts of the situation. So that's a hypothetical, that's very general in that context."

Told it is not a hypothetical, Mr. Snyder said, "The question is, is how should government be involved in that process and how active. So again that's where I'm happy to work with the Legislature."

Asked if that meant Mr. Snyder would not lead on the issue, the governor said, "At this point in time, I've got a number of other things I've had as priorities."

Mr. Snyder's statements provoked a fresh round of criticism from Democrats.

"It's quite obvious that Snyder is now marching lockstep with the far-right and doesn't care about the fact that in Michigan a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender citizen can be fired from their job just because of whom they love," said Lonnie Scott of the liberal group Progress Michigan. "It's hard to imagine that in 2013, Snyder doesn't have a position on this basic human rights issue. He either doesn't believe in equality or he's afraid of scaring off his right-wing donors."

Emily Dievendorf, managing director of Equality Michigan, which advocates for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community, said the "governor's own Civil Rights Commission" has established that discrimination against the LGBT community is occurring in Michigan.

"Equality Michigan believes no qualified and hard-working employees should be fired simply because they are gay," she said in a statement. "We continue to be impressed by the constructive conversations happening around amending the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include LGBT citizens, after 30 years of trying. Thanks to legislators on both sides of the aisle progress will be made sooner than later because it is the right thing for Michigan LGBT citizens, the right thing for Michigan businesses, and the right thing for Michigan history. We think Governor Snyder will want to be a part of that."

#### [Bullies beware: Change is here](#)

From the Traverse City Record-Eagle, 10/24/13

TRAVERSE CITY — West Middle School wasn't Dustin Henrichs' favorite place.

#### [Two couples become first names on East Lansing's domestic partnership registry](#)

From the Lansing State Journal, 10/23/13

EAST LANSING — On the first day it was available to the public, same-sex couples began taking advantage of the city's new domestic partnership registry.

#### [Ex-MSU basketball player fights bullying, pushes autism awareness](#)

From the Detroit News, 10/23/13

Berkley — Anthony Ianni stuck his tongue on a frozen pole, on a dare, to the great delight of bullies in his elementary school.

#### [Students leave 91 bags of apples at Congressman Fred Upton's office to call for immigration reform](#)

From MLive, 10/23/13

KALAMAZOO — Local college students from immigrant families wanted to give Congressman Fred Upton a gift to represent the impact they believe a lack of immigration reform is having on Michigan's \$91 billion agricultural industry.

#### [Ken Braun: Michigan needs entrepreneurs and that means more immigrants](#)

From MLive, 10/23/13

Michigan has an entrepreneur problem, and if you go looking for a reason you'll find a big bulls-eye painted on the highly contentious issue of immigration.

#### [Morning Review: Protesters demand cash help from Hispanic Center after immigrants deported](#)

From MLive, 10/22/13

GRAND RAPIDS,— To say protesters at the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan were frustrated Monday afternoon would be somewhat of an understatement.

#### [Western Michigan University receives national diversity award](#)

From MLive, 10/21/13

KALAMAZOO —Western Michigan University has received a national award for its commitment to diversity.

#### [Airlines mishandle wheelchairs, leave disabled stranded](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 10/21/13

Imagine the next time you take a flight, you are asked to turn over your electronic devices. That's right, your laptop, tablet and smart phone. And when you arrive at your destination they are given back to you broken into pieces. You wouldn't tolerate this, would you?

#### [Rethinking the Washington 'Redskins'](#)

From the Detroit News, 10/21/13

I don't like being lectured by sportscasters about ethnic sensitivity. Or advised by the president of the United States about changing team names. I don't like the language police ensuring that no one anywhere gives offense to anyone about anything. And I fully credit the claim of Washington Redskins owner Dan Snyder and many passionate fans that they intend no malice or prejudice and that "Redskins" has a proud 80-year history they wish to maintain.

#### [Van Buren county educators, student awarded by Hispanic/Latino Commission in Lansing](#)

From MLive, 10/20/13

VAN BUREN COUNTY, MI — Two Van Buren County educators and a Decatur High School student were awarded for their achievements.

#### [The National Guard's Defiance on Civil Rights](#)

From the New York Times, 10/20/13

In August, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel [announced](#) that the Defense Department would begin offering full spousal and family benefits, including health care coverage, housing allowances and survivor benefits, to the same-sex spouses of military personnel. In doing so he swiftly aligned the military with the Supreme Court's ruling in June striking down the Defense of Marriage Act's denial of federal marriage benefits to lawfully married same-sex couples.

#### [Dozens of Michigan same-sex couples hope for federal judge to give go-ahead for marriage](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 10/14/13

Robin Miner-Swartz and Betsy Miner-Swartz will be glued to their phones on Wednesday afternoon as they wait for news on what could be a historic day for the state.

#### [Michigan bill sets sights on cyberbullying](#)

From the Lansing State Journal, 10/13/13

It took Kevin Epling six years to successfully campaign for a law — named in honor of his late son — that requires Michigan school districts to have anti-bullying policies on the books.

#### **Bolger: Talks Continue On Elliott-Larsen Protection For Gays**

From MIRS, 10/11/13

Discussions about extending Michigan's anti-discrimination law to protect gays are still very much alive, House Speaker Jase **BOLGER** (R-Marshall) said this week.

In an interview Wednesday, Bolger said talks involving the Speaker's Office are occurring regularly on the subject. As an example, Bolger said he had a meeting just Wednesday morning about it.

"I think this is a major issue in our society," Bolger said. "And it's an issue that we need to resolve. We need to respect people who are gay. And we need to respect people who are religious.

"How do we do that as a society? And what is government's role in that?"

That's the question the Speaker's Office has been trying to answer since at least June as Rep. Frank **FOSTER** (R-Petoskey) and others have discussed whether the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act should include gay and transgender individuals.

The act, established in 1976, bans discriminatory practices based on religion, race, age and national original.

While the discussions have been going on for months, so far there's been no specific proposal. And Bolger noted this week that he's asked caucus members to wait to debate the proposal until there is a proposal -- if there is one.

The public has questions, Bolger said, but lawmakers can't answer the question without a specific proposal.

"I want to be sure that we're ready to answer those," Bolger said. "So that's the research that we're doing."

Bolger said he and others are still trying to work through what it means to protect individual liberty.

"Individual liberty is individual rights and religious rights," Bolger said. "I don't want to attack anybody because they're gay. I want to respect people, no matter what their sexual orientation is. But I don't want people to be attacked and I don't want to be attacked because of my religious beliefs."

House Democratic caucus spokeswoman Katie CAREY said members of the caucus are "very interested" in working with the Republicans in trying to get something done on this subject this year.

Today is National Coming Out Day, a day of awareness for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

In honor of the day, DontChangeYourself.com, a project of a variety of various pro-diversity groups, released a video on the talks about civil rights in Michigan.

"The video -- called 'Meet Tom' -- tells the story of Tom, a hardworking guy who is great at his job, but who is in danger of being fired just because his boss suspects Tom might be gay," a press release on the video said. "Right now in Michigan it is legal to fire someone based on their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

The organization also noted that 28 Michigan cities, including Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo, Detroit, Battle Creek, Grand Rapids and East Lansing already have non-discrimination ordinances on the books.

#### [State's affirmative action ban has 'chilling effect,' U-M professor says](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 10/10/13

As Kevin Gaines discussed the history of the civil rights movement in a University of Michigan class recently, he said he found himself looking at 15 white faces and two African-American faces.

#### [Top Detroit official suspended with pay, apologizes for racial comments](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 10/10/13

Detroit's chief financial officer, under fire and the subject of an internal investigation over a racially tinged comment he made in a meeting with other city officials, issued an apology today.

#### [Growers say lack of immigration reform is crippling their efforts to harvest crops](#)

From MLive, 10/10/13

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – Meeting in the sanctuary of the Christian Reformed Church of North America's headquarters, a coalition of Michigan fruit and vegetable growers said their crops are rotting in the fields because U.S. immigration policy lacks a workable system for migrant workers.

#### [Broken marriage led to woman's unfair firing at Christian nonprofit, lawsuit claims](#)

From MLive, 10/10/13

GRAND RAPIDS – A woman has filed a federal lawsuit saying she was wrongly fired from her job at InterVarsity Christian Fellowship because her marriage broke down.

#### [Minority students at U-M call for more diversity as affirmative action ban heads to Supreme Court](#)

From MLive, 10/10/13

When Detroit native Dan Green walks into one of his organizational studies classes at the University of Michigan, he's noticeable.

#### [Impostor service animals posing growing problem](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 10/10/13

It's an easy law to break, and dog cheats do. By strapping a vest or backpack that says "service animal" to their pet, anyone can go in stores and restaurants where other dogs are banned, creating growing problems for the disabled community and business owners and leading to calls for better identifying the real deal.

#### **Schuetz Confident Supreme Court Will Uphold Affirmative Action Ban**

From Gongwer, 10/9/13

Saying Michigan's ban on the use of affirmative action is a proper way of ensuring "equal treatment in admissions to our outstanding colleges and universities," Attorney General Bill Schuetz said Wednesday he was confident the U.S. Supreme Court would uphold the controversial voter-passed 2006 constitutional amendment.

Meeting with reporters in advance of the arguments the court will hold in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday, October 15, Mr. Schuetz did not say directly that a favorable ruling could mean the end of affirmative action across the nation.

But he several times said that minority students were being shortchanged by an education system that had failed them, and he argued that as much attention had to be paid to promoting outstanding academic students as colleges and the public pay to outstanding athletic talent.

In his comments to reporters, Mr. Schuette focused on the issue of equal admissions to colleges and universities. And in defending the 2006 amendment, he played off the name of one of its major opponents when he said the state would act on what he said were unconstitutional preferences "by constitutional means and not by any means necessary."

But a spokesperson for the group By Any Means Necessary said the issue actually facing the court was whether the 2006 amendment to the Michigan Constitution - which banned the use of race, sex, color or national origin as a factor in university admissions and government hiring - was an attempt to subvert overall minority rights. The case at hand concerns only the university admissions aspect.

Under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, "a white majority cannot vote to take away the rights of black and Latino minorities," Joyce Schon said. But the adoption by some 58 percent of the electorate for the 2006 amendment did just that.

She said research showed that 85 percent of white voters in that election voted in favor of the proposal while more than 90 percent of minority voters voted against it. "It was a very racially polarized vote, that's what makes it unconstitutional," she said.

Plus, the proposal deals only with certain factors, Ms. Schon argued, so that preferences that should be equally unconstitutional - such as whether a student is admitted on the basis of alumni connections or location - were not affected by the proposal.

Asked if those kinds of preferences should also be barred, Mr. Schuette kept the focus of his comments on whether preferences should be based on racial criteria. If there is any element regarding admissions that has to do with race, Mr. Schuette said, "they should scrap it."

And if a college is using any standard based on "race, gender, national origin," they should scrap it, he said.

Asked if the fact that Justice Elena Kagan will recuse herself from the case will have any bearing on how the court rules, Mr. Schuette said he was convinced the state would win. But he also said he expected a 5-3 ruling by the court.

Arguing for the state before the court will be Solicitor General John Bursch. Mr. Schuette said Mr. Bursch was the "Scherzer and Verlander" combined of the department, a reference to Detroit Tigers pitching aces Max Scherzer and Justin Verlander. Mr. Bursch has argued seven different cases before the U.S. Supreme Court over the last 18 months, and Mr. Schuette said the court members know him by name.

Ms. Schon it still was not decided who would handle the arguments for BAMN, but it would either be Shanta Driver or George Washington.

[Arab-American leaders pledge to fight sexual assault and harassment](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 10/8/13

A coalition of Arab-American officials, led by state Rep. Rashida Tlaib, pledged Tuesday to fight sexual harassment in light of allegations against a civil rights leader and announced the formation of a new support group to help victims.

#### [Michigan affirmative action, ineffective counsel cases set for Supreme Court oral arguments](#)

From MLive, 10/8/13

LANSING — The U.S. Supreme Court returned to the bench Monday to start a new term, and a pair of Michigan cases are among the first issues to be discussed.

#### **Senate Judiciary Moves Cyberbullying Legislation**

From Gongwer, 10/7/13

The Senate Judiciary Committee moved swiftly through its agenda on Tuesday, holding off from voting on a pair of bills increasing penalties for those involved in drive-by shootings but reporting a bill that aims to include cyberbullying in the state's anti-bullying law.

"(Cyberbullying) is becoming one of the most prevalent instances of bullying in our schools," Senator Glenn Anderson (D-Westland) told members of the committee. "As we know, the number of cases of cyberbullying is becoming more and more prevalent, becoming the bullying method of choice, unfortunately."

In addition to requiring boards of school districts, intermediate school districts or public school academies to include cyberbullying (as defined by that board) as a form of bully in its bullying policy, [SB 74](#) also requires districts and academies to report incidents of bullying to the Department of Education per a form and procedure established by the department.

And the committee adopted an S-1 substitute to the bill as well, which establishes an assurance of confidentiality for those reporting bullying to the district and including a provision that if a district updates its policy, it must send a copy of that policy to the department.

Kevin Epling, parent of Matt Epling, for whom the state's anti-bullying law is named after, supported the addition of cyberbullying given Michigan is behind other states when it comes to such a provision, he said. In fact, by the time Michigan finished its first law on bullying, about eight other states had already gone back to revise their laws with regards to cyber issues, Mr. Epling said.

"Until we start putting a cap on this, the body count is going to go up," he said, referring to the increasing number of kids who have committed suicide due to bullying since he first began advocacy work on behalf of his son, who took his life in 2002. "For me, Matt's Law was never about punishment. It was about education and educating people ... to make better choices. Strictly punishment hasn't worked. We have to do something better."

The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan supported the legislation - a change of pace given it has oftentimes in the past opposed legislation regulating such online behavior "on the ground that it aims to criminalize protected First Amendment speech," the ACLU said in a letter.

"Senate bill 74 is different from past introduced cyberbullying legislation in that it appropriately makes school districts responsible for establishing anti-bullying policy, which must address and include a definition of cyberbullying, in a manner that does not infringe on protected First Amendment speech,"



the ACLU letter reads. "Therefore, the ACLU of Michigan does not oppose Senate Bill 74 as currently written."

The Michigan Education Association also supported the bill, which was unanimously reported from committee.

#### [Ailing Midwestern Cities Extend a Welcoming Hand to Immigrants](#)

From the New York Times, 10/6/13

DAYTON, Ohio — Fighting back from the ravages of industrial decline, this city adopted a novel plan two years ago to revive its economy and its spirits: become a magnet for immigrants.

#### **Statistics Show Improved Immigration Picture For Michigan**

From Gongwer, 10/4/13

Fewer people are leaving Michigan and slightly more people are coming into the state, recent statistics on state migration show.

And with ongoing concern about losing young college graduates, the data showed a substantial improvement for the state with a major decline in the percentage of college graduates leaving the state and a slight improvement in the number coming into Michigan.

It remains the case that individuals with college degrees are more likely to leave the state than to move into it, but Ken Darga, the state's demographer, said the data shows that persons who have only graduated high school or have some college background are more likely to move out of the state than those persons with college degrees.

And persons with college degrees are more likely to move into Michigan than those who do not the same level of educational attainment, he said in an email.

Updating data on migration patterns in the latest release of the American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau, Mr. Darga said the state saw the lowest level of out-migration of people aged 25 and older since 2005.

And while there was a slight decline in the in-migration of individuals from 2011 to 2012, the state's net migration picture was its most favorable since 2005.

Out-migration of persons with at least a bachelor's degree fell from 3 percent of the population in 2011 to about 2.2 percent in 2012, and the in-migration of the same category improved slightly from 1.6 percent of the population in 2011 to about 1.8 percent in 2012.

In fact, the net migration - considering both out and in-migration - for people with college degrees improved considerably for the state in 2012 from 2011. In 2011, overall migration affected about 1.2 percent of the population, the statistics showed, but in 2012 that had fallen to about 0.5 percent of the affected population.

Ironically, Michigan's out-migration picture began to improve with the advent of the so-called Great Recession and has continued to improve with the gradual improvement of the economy.

#### [Lisa Cook: Combating inequality in America a concern without equal](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 10/7/13

The past week has given us an all-too-rare confluence of data and personal stories that can help Americans understand what has happened to their living standards during the past several decades. Both the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 American Community Survey and Robert Reich's new documentary, "Inequality for All," were released, and their common theme is the defining issue of our time: inequality.

#### [Multilingual driving schools help immigrants get on the road](#)

From the Detroit News, 10/6/13

Sterling Heights— Determined to master parallel parking, Iqbal Kina concentrates as she maneuvers her car between a pair of cones in the parking lot behind Madamma Driving School.

#### [Delhi approves LGBT protections](#)

From City Pulse, 10/3/13

On Tuesday night, Delhi Township became the third community in greater Lansing to pass a non-discrimination ordinance protecting individuals in housing, employment and public accommodations based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Two more communities — Delta and Meridian townships — appear poised to approve similar legislation in the next month.

#### [Arab civil rights group loses 2 more board members after sex harassment probe is dropped](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 10/3/13

Two more members of the advisory board of the Michigan chapter of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) have resigned, blasting the civil rights organization over its handling of sexual harassment allegations against one of the group's leaders.

#### [Supreme Court poised to tilt further to the right](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 10/2/13

WASHINGTON - After two blockbuster terms in which it saved President Obama's health care law and advanced the cause of same-sex marriage, the Supreme Court appears poised to tack to the right in its upcoming term on a range of social issues, from abortion and contraception to race and prayer.

#### [University Of Texas Conservative Students Hold Affirmative Action Bake Sale](#)

From Huffington Post, 10/2/13

A group of conservative students at the University of Texas at Austin held a bake sale on campus last week, charging different prices for brownies based on the customer's race. The group said it wanted to show why affirmative action is a terrible policy.

#### [KKK rally in Gettysburg cancelled because of government shutdown](#)

From The Grio, 10/2/13

A planned Ku Klux Klan rally at a historic landmark of American history won't happen due to the federal government shutdown.

#### [U.S. alleges sexual harassment by Grand Rapids housing manager](#)

From the Detroit Free Press, 10/1/13

The federal government is accusing a Grand Rapids housing manager of sexually harassing female tenants and offering benefits in exchange for sexual favors.

#### [Wil Haygood, journalist who discovered story behind 'The Butler,' talks at SVSU](#)

From MLive, 10/1/13

SAGINAW — Wil Haygood's speech on the campus of Saginaw Valley State University made an impression on Laela Al-Ashari.